

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness



Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

The mission of this task force

was to get everyone on the same page to determine what we can do collectively to address homelessness and reduce our homeless population.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

The Task Force Members were divided into 2 groups to get the most accomplished.

Group 1: Shelters and Direct Care

Group 2: Health, Business, and Other Services

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Group 1: Shelters and Direct Care

Alan Johnson, Jesus Burger

Andrea Dollahite, Made to Love Ministries

Captain Mark Jacobs, Salvation Army

Doris Ramaly, Longview Interfaith Hospitality Ministries

Eric Burger, Highway 80 Rescue Mission

Helen Johnson, House of Hope

Holly Fuller, Partners in Prevention

James Bettis, Longview Police Department

Janice Bunt, Caring and Sharing

Jeff Borgwardt, Ministerial Alliance

Johnnie Johnson, Community Outreach Mission

Karen Holt, Northeast Texas Homeless Consortium

Linda Cunningham, Newgate Mission

Robin Fruia, Longview Community Ministries

Shannon Trest, Women's Center of East Texas

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Group 2: Health, Business, and Other Services

Anthony Brooks, Longview Regional Medical Center

Brenda Day-Bevis, D.O.R.S.

Cary Hilliard, First Baptist Church

Cheteva Marshall, Longview Housing Authority

Donna Sharp, Greater Longview United Way

Hank Hester, Longview Fire Department

Inman White, Community Healthcare

Jeff Brown, Wellness Pointe

Josh Tubb, Gregg County Sheriff's Office

Kevin Marshall, Gregg County Veterans Services

Lewis Thompson, Ministerial Alliance

Linda Oyer, East Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Michael Black, JBA Financial Services

Murray Moore, Business owner / property manager

Ron Short, Christus Good Shepherd Medical Center

Scott Lewis, Longview Transit

Tim Wiseman, Wiseman Ministries

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

In looking at what government can feasibly do, we reminded ourselves of the role of government:

The primary role of government is protection of the people through laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and services.

That role is the same whether for a resident with a home or without a home.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We determined that the roles of service providers are the following:

- Shelters provide emergency and transitional housing, feed those in need, help individuals become self-sufficient, and offer life changing programs.
- Churches provide spiritual services, resources, and referrals to other service providers.
- Nonprofits provide specific services and resources.
- Good Samaritans act on their own free will, responding to a need they see.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

The task force suggested that the homeless population be served differently depending on their specific situation.

Homeless Categories:


- Situational homeless
- Sheltered homeless
- Unsheltered homeless
- Chronic unsheltered homeless

We decided that each category is different, but most homeless people that we can help have temporary problems.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We determined that we need to coordinate efforts, not duplicate them.

- The task force saw an opportunity to better communicate between shelters, nonprofits and law enforcement.
- They suggested quarterly meetings between each other.
- They discussed utilizing mission tracking software.
- They discussed applying for a grant to bring an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer to assist with homelessness programs.
- They evaluated Houston's "The Way Home" program as a model for coordinating homeless services.



The Way Home is the collaborative model to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Harris County and Fort Bend County.



BE A PART OF CHANGING THE PATH FOR
HOUSTON'S HOMELESS

The Way Home

Changing the Path for Houston's Homeless

What does your donation do?

\$25

provides a set of cleaning supplies for a newly housed young adult.

\$50

supplies bedroom and bathroom linens for a formerly homeless Veteran.

\$100

equips a newly-housed family with a full set of kitchen supplies.

\$250

covers the cost of an entire "Welcome Basket".

The Way Home

Changing the Path for Houston's Homeless

[HOME](#)[ABOUT US](#)[TAKE ACTION](#)[PARTNERS](#)[LATEST NEWS](#)[CONTACT US](#)[DONATE NOW](#)

Help Others Find The Way Home By Getting Involved

Volunteer



Click here to get involved with one of our partner organizations. Our current Partner Highlight is Houston Food Bank. **Click here** for more information.

Donate



Click here to support The Way Home by making a monetary donation, providing furniture and general support to those who need it, or provide **Welcome Baskets** to those moving into their new homes.

Advocate



Click here to take the pledge to change the path for Houston's homeless, and to stay up to date on news and events regarding The Way Home.



AmeriCorps VISTA

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** ★★ ★



AmeriCorps VISTA

- AmeriCorps members provide a year of full-time service to nonprofits and public agencies to create and expand programs that bring individuals and communities out of poverty.
- AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which is a federal agency and the nation's largest grant-maker in support of service and volunteering.
- Housing, veteran homelessness, and mental health services are some of the current priorities for AmeriCorps programs.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We determined there are enough beds available in Longview so no person ever has to sleep on the street.

- The 2017 Point-in-Time Survey revealed that we have approximately 470 homeless individuals in Longview.
- Through homeless service organizations, there are 400+ beds available with the ability to house as many as are needed on a nightly basis.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We examined the possibility of a centralized area for the homeless population, not in center of town.

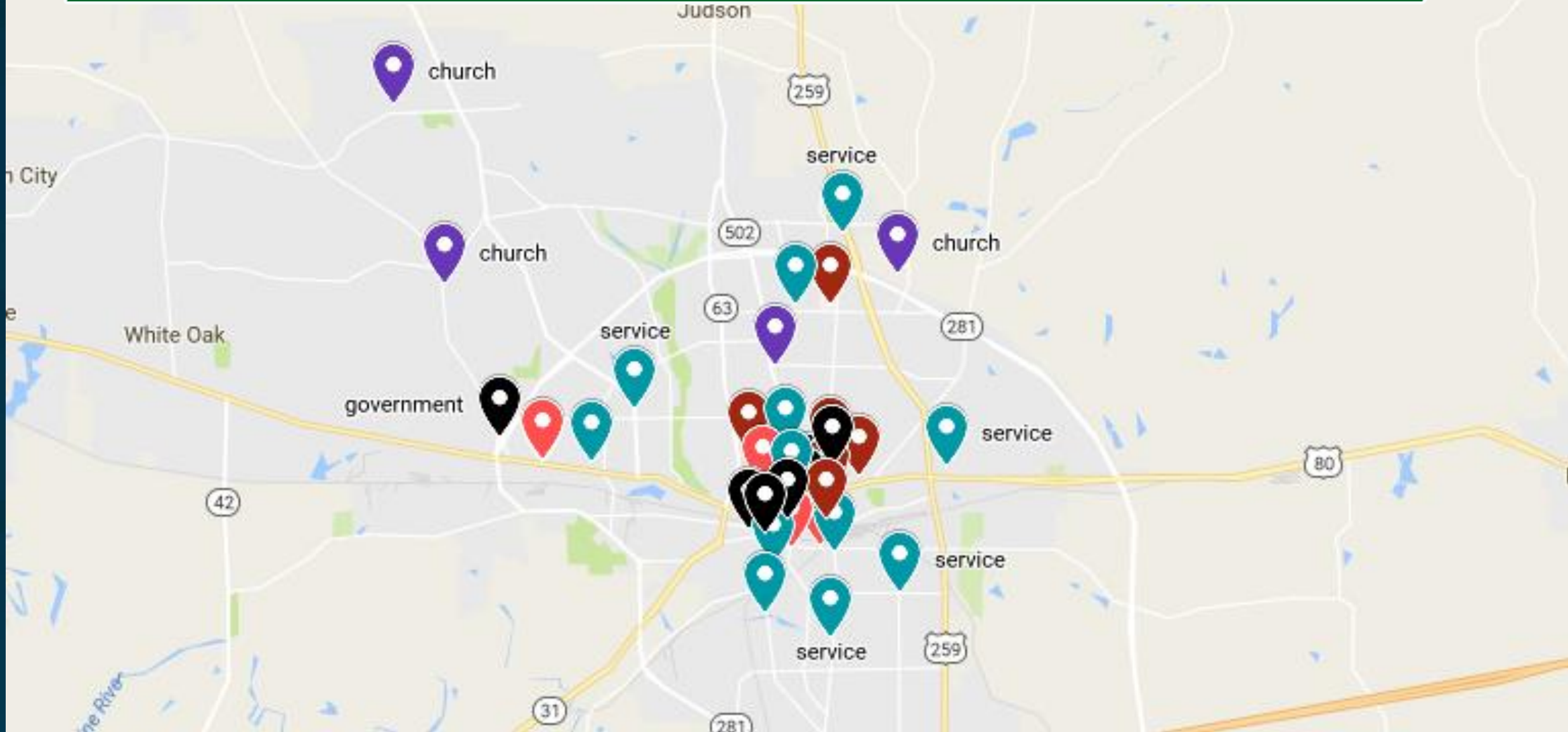
- The desire for centralization of services should not be confused with forced relocation of individuals.
- Our homeless population in Longview have every right to assemble as other Longview residents.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We determined instead of one location, it is more feasible to have multiple locations of services in coordinated areas.

- Coordinated areas are easier for those providing services.
- Coordinated areas are easier for those needing services.
- Government and nonprofits could provide on-site services at established locations.

Homeless Services and Resources



Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

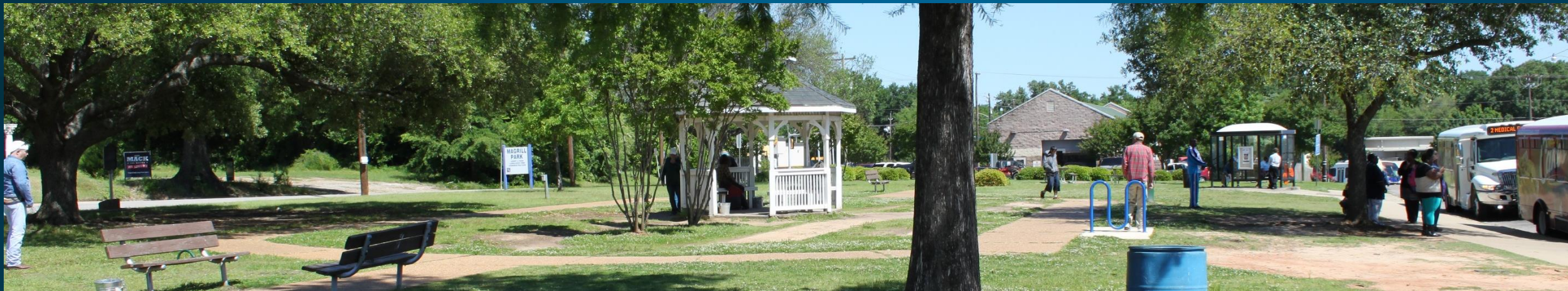
We determined one way to serve more people is to host “Service Fairs” to offer centralized services and information to homeless individuals.

- These will be held periodically at a central location such as the Exhibit Building.
- These could be held as a mobile event wherever homeless individuals congregate.
- These would be an opportunity for individuals to get ID's, apply for work, find housing, and receive services.
- The goal is to host the first Service Fair in early 2018.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

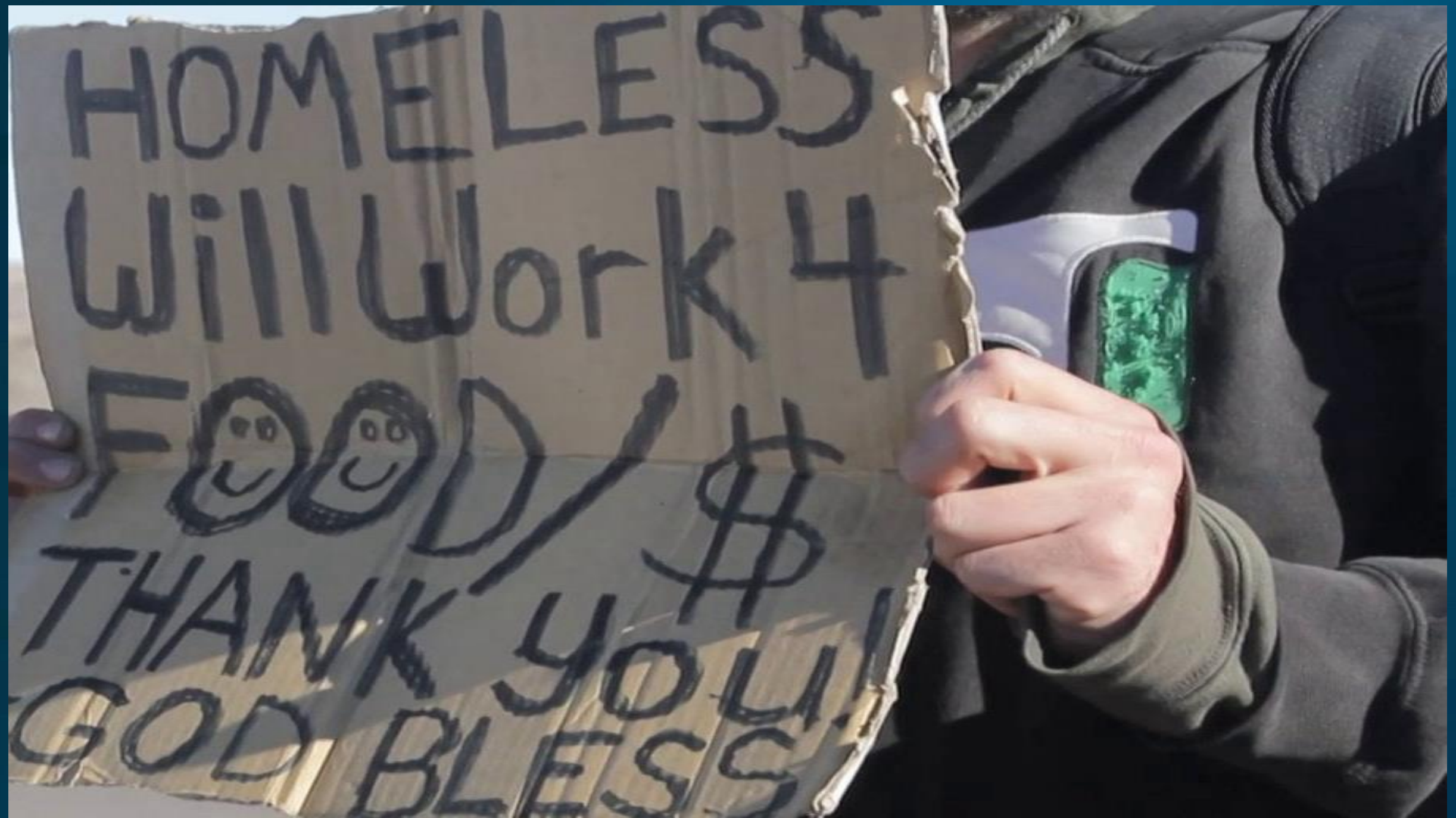
We suggest moving the Longview Transit transfer station away from Magrill Plaza within a short time frame.

- A federal grant has been applied for and received.
- The move is scheduled to occur in late 2018 or early 2019.



Longview Transit Transfer Station





Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

The Task Force suggested utilizing homeless residents who are willing to work to assist any resident, business in our city, as well as, the City of Longview with any labor needs they may have.

- We need to create a 6-month pilot program in coordination with an existing day labor program.
- The House of Disciples has really stepped up to spearhead this pilot program.
- This program is designed to:
 - Provide labor for individuals, businesses and the City of Longview.
 - Provide compensation and a job for participants.
 - Provide life coaching and mentorship for participants.
 - Provide incentives to encourage participation, such as groceries and meals.
 - Provide opportunity to learn job skills and a consistent wage, thereby providing a doorway out of homelessness.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

How will the work program work?

- Each worker will be paid \$8 per hour and be able to work 6 hours each day.
- The program will be coordinated by one full-time staff member and one weekend staff member.
- Each worker will be provided transportation to/from work and meals while they are working.
- The program will provide life-skills training and referrals to services.
- In order for the program to be fully self-funded, the customers (Individuals, Employers and Businesses in Longview) will be charged \$11.17 per hour for whatever services these workers are performing.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

There are two types of workers in this program.

- **One:** This is for those individuals who are only desiring daily work and are opting out of any further assistance.
- **Two:** This is for those individuals who are seeking a “personal growth plan” to help map them out of homelessness. Individuals will be assigned a Life Coach to mentor, set goals, and direct toward other agencies to:
 - Assist with obtaining proper ID's.
 - Assist with health needs.
 - Assist with housing.
 - Assist with addiction / counseling.
 - Assist with education.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We saw a need to communicate to residents about the best way to help the homeless population.

- We need to encourage the general public to NOT give money directly to homeless individuals, but instead:
 - Give “outreach bags” with food and service information.
 - Give directly to nonprofits that provide services.
- We need to develop a marketing campaign to share this message.
- We need to offer trainings to nonprofits, churches and law enforcement about best practices for helping the homeless.
- We can utilize Houston's MeaningfulChange.org as an educational model.

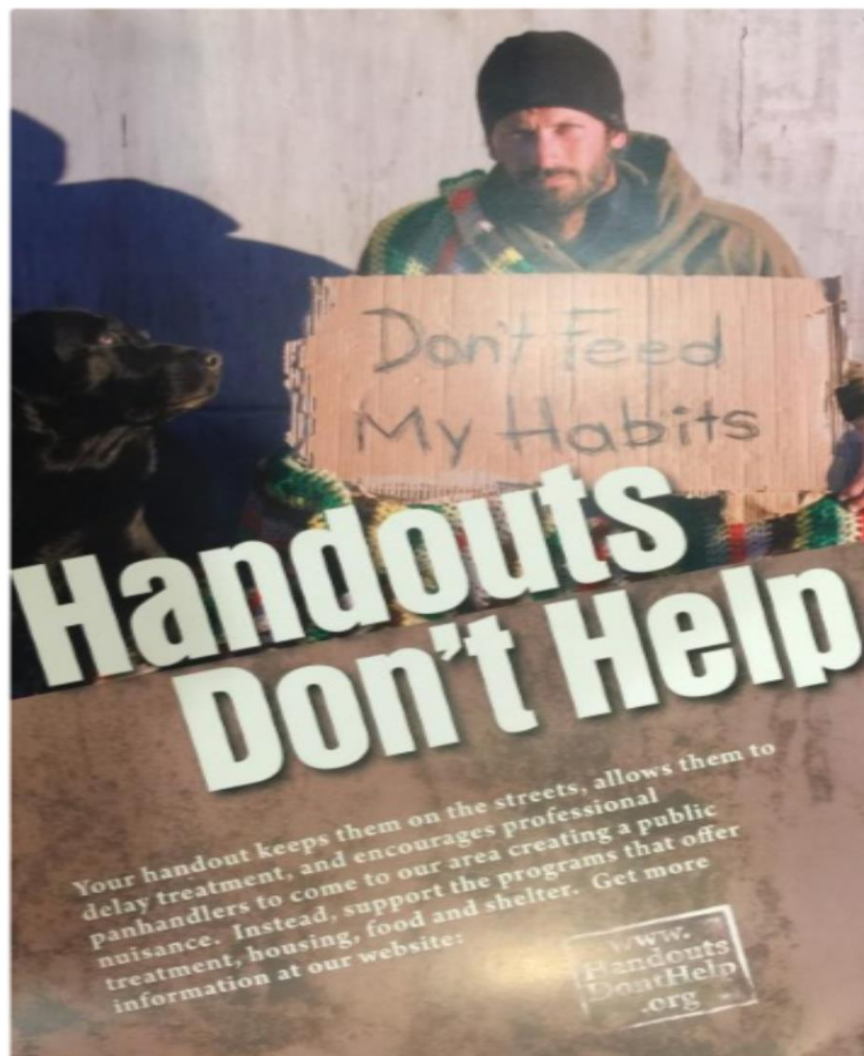
It's okay to say no to panhandlers.

Meaningful Change —
Not Spare Change



There's a better way to give: meaningfulchange.org

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE HAND OUTS DON'T HELP CAMPAIGN



PANHANDLING



DONATE TO LOCAL CHARITY

TEXT "HANDUP" TO 91999

HANDOUTS DONT HELP.ORG

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We need to implement “Solicitation Free Zones.”

- These zones would prohibit solicitation, including panhandling, within key commercial corridors such as Downtown, Loop 281, Fourth Street, Hwy 80, as well as near ATM's and business entrances.
- Our solicitation free zones would be modeled after other communities who have already done this; such as Dallas, Fort Worth, and others.
- This is an important part of protecting our area businesses.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

City staff are already evaluating current ordinances that we have in place and will recommend how we can modify them.

- It has been determined that we need to modify existing ordinances on encampment, trespassing and solicitation.
- We must prohibit aggressive solicitation.
- City attorneys are researching and drafting these ordinances to insure Constitutionality.
- We need to consider alternatives to fines and jail time for minor issues, which could be modeled after drug courts.
- We need to consider collaboration between law enforcement and the Gregg County Wellness Care Collaborative.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We see a need to address the mental health crisis occurring in our homeless population.

- We need to:
 - Identify homeless mental needs.
 - Find ways to offer treatment.
 - Advocate for federal / state funding to help address this national problem.
 - Consider establishing a “Day activity shelter.”
 - Explore financial incentive-based programs to encourage residents to complete mental health treatment.
 - Develop better partnerships between law enforcement, mental health professional, and service providers.
- We need funding from the state on all these ideas.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We need to consider a peer-run Day Activity Shelter.

- Homeless individuals need somewhere to go during the day while the overnight shelters are closed.
- A peer-run concept would allow individuals that have been homeless to help serve as peer leaders.
- Day Shelter would provide a structured day and other assistance.
- This is a concept suggested by Community Healthcore based on success seen with peer-run programs here and in other communities.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We need to create a Police “Homeless Outreach Team.”

- This would be a pilot program in which two LPD officers would be entirely dedicated to the Homeless Population.
- Officers would serve to reduce homeless-related complaints by acting as a bridge between homeless individuals and available appropriate services.
- Homeless Outreach Team would be modeled after successful programs in other communities such as Lubbock.
- The cost of this program would be \$170,000+ for two full time officers, which we do not have in our budget.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Homeless Outreach Team officers would perform various duties, including:

- Responding to homeless related calls for service.
- Performing daily checks at homeless shelters.
- Creating community partnerships with nonprofits and local businesses.
- Educating the community about H.O.T.
- Conducting outreach and referring homeless to resources and services.
- Assisting homeless in making appointments.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

The Lubbock Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team reported the following during a one year period:

- 1744** Officer interactions with homeless persons.
- 135** Referrals given to the Homeless for providers or services.
- 296** Officer transports of homeless to referral agency.
- 26** Times homeless voluntarily refused services.
- 32** Homeless camps cleaned up.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

We need to improve aesthetics as a City.

- We need to encourage businesses and the City to use deterrence technology when adding seating and landscaping.
- We need to add arm rests to downtown benches.
- We need to reduce electrical access and secure outdoor outlets.





Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Next steps for City Council:

- Review ordinances as presented by legal staff.
- Support new work program spearheaded by House of Disciples.
- Promote “Meaningful Change” style marketing initiative.
- Assist with finding funding in current budget or outside funding in order to create a Homeless Outreach Team.
- Support using city resources to conduct Service Fair.

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

Next steps for Task Force and Community:

- Encourage individuals or organizations to take the lead on various outlined goals.
- Seek community fundraising or grants for unfunded goals.
- Continue collaboration between organizations and task force members.
- Promote “Meaningful Change” style marketing initiative.
- Participate in Service Fairs.
- We will reevaluate this in 4 months to tweak any necessary objectives.

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